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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/531,711	04/18/2005	Scott Christopher Adam	352078007US	1475
25096	7590	12/20/2005	EXAMINER	
PERKINS COIE LLP			DANG, HOANG C	
PATENT-SEA			ART UNIT	
P.O. BOX 1247			PAPER NUMBER	
SEATTLE, WA 98111-1247			3672	
DATE MAILED: 12/20/2005				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 1, 8, 10,12 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Smet (US 4,850,440) (e.g., figure 3a and column 7, lines 10-20; column 6, line 54 through column 7, line 9; and column 4, lines 51-61).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 10-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Smet '440 in view of Trueman et al (WO 97/21900).

Smet discloses the invention as claimed except for the structure that provides the biasing force to the drilling head. Smet does not disclose the use of an asymmetrical gauging ring. However, Trueman et al disclose alternative means for biasing a drilling head that includes retro jet nozzles and an asymmetrical gauging ring as claimed (page 9, lines 9-22). It would have been

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obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use retro jets and/or an asymmetrical gauging ring as claimed in view of the teaching of Trueman et al.

Allowable Subject Matter

5. Claims 2-7 and 9 objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

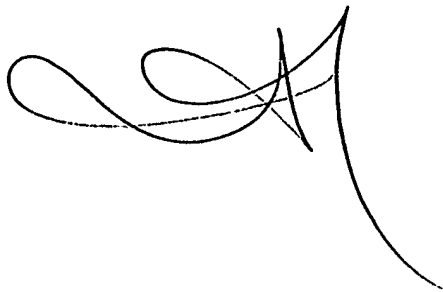
7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Hoang Dang whose telephone number is 571-272-7028. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:15-5:45 Monday-Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Dave Bagnell can be reached on 571-272-6999. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Hoang Dang
Primary Examiner
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A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long, sweeping tail that curves downwards and to the right.